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Atari Online News, Etc.
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~ Juno Offers Free Web! ~ People Are Talking! ~ Mozilla Previews
~ States Want Net Taxes! ~ Space Invaders For N64 ~ Ask Jeeves To Fight
~ Toys R Us Fails Santa! ~ ISPs To Hunt Viruses! ~ Y2K Failures
~ Intel Goes After AMD! ~ Dumbest Bosses Crowned ~ Happy Holidays!

-* Cordless Mice And Keyboards! *-
-* Quarter Of Online Purchases To Fail *-
-* Amazon.com Founder Is Time Person Of Year! *-

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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a Happy Holiday! Regardless of which holiday you celebrate around this time of year, it’s a good time to reflect the goals of mankind. It’s not just a religious celebration. Nor is it a season to count presents. It’s a season for giving, sharing, and yes, receiving. It’s a time to be with family and friends; it’s a time to help others.

For me, I’ll spend some time with new friends, as well as family. I’ll also be looking into ways to help those that have helped bring joy into my life. Specifically, those agencies which provided me the means to help my wife and I adopt two wonderful dogs. Personally, this is a way for me to help them continue to help those that cannot help themselves: abandoned animals. Think about it. It doesn’t take much but it means so much. The homeless, be they people or animals, are in need. People have devastating illnesses; you can help. This is the time of year when our help means hope.

On a lighter note, news is winding down for this year. 2000 is almost upon us. It’s going to feel very strange writing that number rather than 19-something! It’s going to feel quite foreign for some time, I think.

So what will 2000 bring? I believe that technology is going to continue to grow by leaps and bounds. I think that we’re going to be in for one helluva ride! And we’ll be here to help bring it you.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. By the time you read this, Christmas will over with and there’ll be nothing left to do but wad up all that wrapping paper and haul it out to the trash.

Well, not actually "nothing left". There are always the warm memories. The time spent shopping for that one perfect gift for that special someone, pushing through the hordes of brain-dead fools who, once they get into a store, seem to completely lose any recollection of why they are there in the first place.

Memories of the day are special too. Finding out just days before the big day that dinner for the entire family is being held at your house this year. All those people huddled into a kitchen too small to hold them all, rushing to beat the "dinner deadline" imposed by some relative that no one likes in the first place. And then there’s the meal itself. Who could

possibly deny they pure joy of a traditional Christmas dinner as the aroma gently wafts through the house and the happy surprise you feel as you are told that, instead of the customary turkey, you are going to be treated to... lasagna.

And of course, who could forget the heady anticipation of conversation with the in-laws while wanting to do nothing more than to simply relax and try to forget the whole uncomfortable situation.

Ah, the holidays. There's nothing like 'em. <grin>

Well, let's get to the news and STuff on the UseNet

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

This one doesn't really fit in the "news, hints, and tips" category, but it mirrors something I've thought for quite a while and I figured that it deserved some airplay. Steve Bailey posts:

"I just want to thank everyone here for showing how a NG should be run. I am on a few other NG's and the netiquette, flaming, OT posting and general level or professionalism is so poor that I wonder where these morons come from. Since joining this NG I have been bowled over at how great you guys are. Now I am M$ using scum who should be shot. ;o) I came here to learn a bit more about Atari's as I have a friend with a motherload of them and considering I am studying for my MCSE (M$ certified systems engineer) cert. I want to learn more about other systems in order to better understand computers in general. The people here have been courteous to me and very helpful considering my inexperience with Atari's. I fully admit my lack of knowledge on most of this NG's topics but try to put in my two cents when I feel I have something to offer the rest of you.

Thanks to all of you and hopefully I can join the ranks of Atari users at sometime in the near future. (I have an offer from another poster here to borrow some equipment)."

Steve Hammond tells the other Steve:

"Some (maybe quite a few) of us use other platforms too, but most all got their computing start with Atari. For me it was a 1040 Stf I bought in 1986 - almost the Jurassic era when dealing with computers. And while I have a multi giga-hertz AMD-based PC sitting on my desk, I still do most of "serious" computing using my TT030 and Atari programs that I have acquired. I would say that over the years from the Genie and Delphi text based forums to the current state of affairs with the Internet, the Atari user groups have uniformly been some of the best that I have dealt with. Oh, there are the fanatics :), but they have their own newsgroup(s) and when they occasionally show up here, are politely asked to keep their posts elsewhere.

Anyway, welcome to the group. As you get to know the Atari and its various flavors of operating systems (or enhancements as some might refer to them) you begin to realize that Windows isn't all that special....

I apologize for the UUE attachment - it seems as if my "thumbs" got in

the way as I hit the send button in Newsie."

Steve Bailey tells him:

"I don’t know if there was an attachment(?) That is why I am here. You guys seem to know stuff that the rest of us M$ dummies are too stupid to understand. There is so much I have to learn yet and when it comes to netiquette this group has really opened my eyes. Trust me I got an earful for sending HTML text to a friend of mine who is an Atari user. Wow!"

The conversation continues, but I don’t want any of us to get swelled heads or anything. <grin>

Greg Martin asks for help with a memory upgrade:

"Hope these questions are clear! Anyway.......

1) I have a 520ST with 30 pin SIMMS, are these normal PC 30pin SIMMS?, as I also have an ST1040, the only difference between this and the 520 is that it doesn’t have any audio phono plugs on the back, will this also be using SIMMS as its memory as well?, and can this be upgraded with PC 30pin SIMMS?

2) If this is the case, and I put say, 4mb of memory, is it possible to create a Ramdisk with GEM?"

Nicholas Bales tells Greg:

"I assume this is an STE, not an ST or STF. Yes, these are standard 30 pin SIMMs, probably 2x256K.

[Your second machine] is an ST or STF. These ones don’t use standard SIMMs and are rather difficult to upgrade.

The STE is slightly more powerful than the STF and can be upgraded to 4Mb. Once you’ve done this, the STE will be a much better machine and you can keep the STF as a back up machine.

Yes, you can run a RAM disk among other things. You could also start considering running comfortably a multitasking OS like MiNT or MagiC, or web surfing, or...

Details about all this are in the Quick FAQ (http://quickfaq.atari.org)."

Greg tell Nick:

"Thanks for the breakdown, great pieces of information. I unfortunately went straight from developing ’sinclair’ machines, straight to PC’s, so missed out on the atari, I am only just starting to catch up on this glorious machine.

I will certainly pick up the quickfaq and have a read through."

Brandon Alexander asks for help with a ’monitor alternative":

"Can anyone in the group give me details about how to use a regular television with a MEGA/STE? I have three ST monitors which don’t work (two SM 124s and an SC 1224). I bought an RF modulator from Radio Shack and tried to interface but I’m still not getting the ST screen on the TV. Perhaps someone will also know if there is any help online for ST users."

Derek Warren tells Brandon:

"Since all STEs already have the RF modulator built in, you just need a straight connection between your STE and the TV's antenna/cable input.

You can buy an RCA female -> Coax male adapter from Radio Shack.

Get yourself some good shielded RCA cable while you're at it!

Connect your STE up to the TV, tune into channel 2 (or 3, possibly) and boot your Mega.. enjoy!

P.S. If you want to run demos and such that demand 50Hz, you'll want to use a TV with a vertical hold adjustment. Many sets made after 1990 or so don't give you this option!!"

Brandon tells Derek:

"Thanks. I had no idea the STE had it built in; no wonder it didn't work with the RF Mod I bought. I'll try it and let you know how I make out."

John Garone asks about something that I've wondered about too:

"This may be re-hashing but I thought it important:
I have access to three different newsgroups and I get three different lists to download from. Anywhere from different start/stop dates to only getting the previous month at times. All three vary in the full content of posts (all three have missing posts in three different varieties). Are NG servers non-standard or is this software problem?

In Newsie---Setting News prefs (max. to fetch/view) to 999/9999 seems to be half the problem. Resetting to 900/900 fixed the worst case of only getting the previous month and shortened post lists (on all three servers). I haven't totally compared all yet though (for differences in what's there or not)."

Mario Becroft tells John:

"The quality of newsfeeds is very variable. I was getting only about half of the messages in this newsgroup, and none at all in some other groups with my previous ISP, but my current ISP has much better newsfeed and I don't think I am missing anything significant now. I think Deja News and the like are a good reference to check what you are missing.

The problem you noticed may be caused by something different. I just mentioned the quality of your newsfeed since I have observed this problem myself. I am not familiar with Newsie so I don't know about problems that are Newsie-specific. I don't know whether the problem you mention is in fact well-known or not, and my suggestion may or may not have anything to do with the problem. It is just another idea to consider."

Martin Holmes asks:

"I must be missing something...

How do you print the current page from CAB 2.7 INCLUDING graphics?
So far I have been successful only getting text but I can grab a pic using Imagecopy 4.

My set up is MSTE (TOS 2.06), mono monitor and HP540 printer."

Chris Simon tells Martin:

"I think CAB's print dialog has an option for printing images or not - make sure you've got it selected correctly."

Ashley Seabrook adds:

"You don't mention GDOS (or NVDI after v3 or SpeedoGDOS, etc...) -
As far as I know you can only print from CAB with GDOS."

Mike Freeman adds his own experiences:

"And more importantly, CAB can't print *images* with SpeedoGDOS (at least not with my version 4). Only text. This may be the problem, if he can only print text. If images are important, use NVDI."

Brian Van Tilborg asks for information about emulators:

"I am posting this in FRUSTRATION. After reading this you will realize that my world will not come to an end as I know it. The following is not a life and death situation, nor is it relevant to computing but only to game playing.

I have an original game called RVF RACER for the ATARI ST. This wonderful game was marketed in 1989 by Microplay software. On the cover it lists, "Atari 52ST0/1040ST/MEGAS" Colour Monitor, Joystick required.

Well I have the following STs that this game works and DOES NOT work on.

```
520ST 1/2meg ram, TOS 1.0   (Game Works) Many different 354 & 314 drives
520ST 1/2meg ram, TOS 1.0   (Game Works)"                              "
520ST 1  meg ram, TOS 1.0   (Game Works)"                              "
520ST 2.5meg ram, TOS 1.0   (Game Doesn't Work)"                       "
                             Use Railroad Tycoon 1meg fix, doesn't work.

520STFM .5meg ram, TOS 1.2   (Game Works)
MegaST2 2meg ram, TOS 1.2   (Game Doesn't Work)
MegaST2 me2g ram  TOS 1.4   (Game Doesn't Work)
                            Railroad 1meg fix, no effect.

1040STe 2meg ram  TOS 1.6   (Game Doesn't Work)
                            Railroad tycoon 1meg fix, allows game to run.
```

So RVF racer has a VERY HIGH failure rate with Ataris, let alone ones that it claims it will work with on the cover of the box.

So I wanted to hook up a link between 2 STs and play heads up racing. I mean I do have a couple of STs around so why not. I have done the same with STunt Track Racer.

Well it doesn't say in the manual if 1meg is required for this feature to work. So I tried it with my 520STs.

As soon as the link is chosen the link menu appears and the game locks up. Hooking up my 1meg 520ST allows the menu to appear and doesn't appear to lock up until a 1/2meg machine makes its selection.

So I try the 1040STe with the 1meg fix program & the 520ST with the 1meg upgrade. When the railroad Tycoon fix is run the Link is NOT detected between the 2 computers. ARRGGHH!

So, what I need is a stock 1040STF to link with the 520ST with 1meg upgrade. Of all the damn STs I have I don't have the needed combination.

So, I buy a used 1040STF with TOS 1.0 to play this stupid game that I enjoy with my friends when they come over (Yes I have friends). I figure with the above listing of computers and testing of the game, that I can't miss, well WRONG AGAIN.

The Game doesn't even BOOT up on it, let alone test if it will link. Needless, to say I test out many other games that give some of my computers trouble like Falcon 1.0 and sure enough, all other games that should work with an STF work just fine. DOUBLE ARRRGGGHHH!!

Somewhere between copy protection and memory, they have really screwed this game up for me.

Why do I know this? Because I have the Medway version.

The Medway version boots up on EVERY SINGLE ONE OF MY STs. Even My MEGASTes which I didn't even bother to list. Every Ram Combination, every TOS combination. I am really ticked off! Gee, why if I have something that works?

Why? Well, because unless you have the real game you wouldn't know that the crack is very incomplete.

1) There is no Link feature in the crack. Eliminated from the menu.
2) If you progress through the tracks and ability, from Clubman,national to international Status the game will END!!! In the original game if you reach International STatus and win the World Championship, you are allowed to race at Every RaceTrack at the international level against international riders.
3) As me and my Racing buddy friends have been playing this game during the winters for nearly a decade, we have always wanted to link th eSTs and play head to head against each other at the world level on all tracks.

Of course after owning many STs and trying for years to get this game to WORK on STs let alone LINK, I can see it just isn't in the cards.

So what have PC emulators got to do with this THREAD???

Well, my one friend has never owned an Atari. He has come over to my house to play RVF racer for nearly 10years. (We just line up 7 Ataris using the crack, and race individually on separate screens, seeing who finishes first after 20laps). Anyway this friend buys his first computer ever, a Pentium ugly thing, and gets the Pacifist and RVF racer. In only 2 days a computer inept user has my favourite Atari game working on his PC. And it works VERY GOOD!!! Mind you with the Crack limitations I mentioned Above.

So here I am with a TT and Falcon, which the crack won't work with, and a bunch of STs including a very standard 1040ST that I just purchased, that don't even work with the original game. I also know that this program will not work with any Atari clones, present or future.

So for something as ridiculous as a game, it really makes you wonder why

emulation supports ST games software better than the REAL DEAL.

I am really ticked off. At least I got a 60Meg hd and 2 more monitors for my $40.cdn along with that 1040ST.

Is this whining enough.

Anyway, I am starting to have far to large a collection of STs, and I don't even know how I got some many in just 2 years. I only had a 520ST with 2.5meg ram up until 1 year ago."

Pera Putnik wonders aloud:

"I wonder how can someone with such big PC-fobia even being something like frustrated ?? <grin>"

Brian replies:

"I know it is hard to believe isn't it. Thanks for diagnosing e,m doctor Putnik. If I ever get the nerve up to leave my house, I may then try to deal with my phobia for PCs.

>Instead spending so much money on so many Atari, you should find someone
>who can modify game to work on every Atari (at least ST) version... Or try
>TOS loaders...

Well, actually I did spend what was considered to be a lot of money on my Atari back in 1987. Laser Printer and Ram upgrade + massive 20meg hd cost me nearly $1700CDN. My Initial 520ST with Colour Monitor about $750CDN and a monochrome monitor for $175.00.

Then not a penny on my Atari for 5 more years. Then it was just used for Word Processing after 1992 and then given to my nephew to play with.

1997 I decided to use my Atari Again, and in the fall, I ended up hooking it to the internet. Not a penny more spent from that initial purchase. Even the 28800 supra modem was acquired for free.

Of all the STs I listed, I got them all since March of 1999.

I have only paid for a handful of the computers.

$20.cdn for the MegaST2 with 30Meg Hd. +Colour and Mono
$40.cdn for the 1040ST with 60Meg HD. +Colour and Mono.

All the other STs, including 2 MegaSTes4 with 250meg drives and 50meg drives, I have acquired for absolutely no monetary value or trade. Simply given to me. And as you can see, I am now running out of room. But do I ever have some neat midi maze games going on:-). The STs are just a fun hobby.

So as anyone realizes, $40.00 Cdn is about $25US or less, and isn't really a lot of anything. In fact I probably good have just taken it for free, but I was in a giving mood for the holiday season.

As for finding someone who could modify the game, what a great idea. What are you doing over christmas, I would be happy to let you modify it:-).

TOS loaders, now there is a good idea, why didn't I think of that.

However I have every TOS and ST combination. I can run the game on every ST now with the crack, which in reality is all the Emulator can run, as it too can’t run the real complete game either.

Anyway, part of the problem with the commercial version isn’t just the TOS as it is the memory configurations.

The posts main intent is to show that back when commercial software houses were supporting the ST, they caused more problems then necessary when invoking copy protection. The crack removes the protection and the game runs on everything. The problem with the 1040ST TOS 1.0 isn’t the memory or the TOS but the fact that the disk drive doesn’t read past the 79th track. I will be replacing it and problem solved. It is a very old 1040ST.

So Pera, I hope to see you soon. Get that plane ticket ready. All I want is the crack that is complete, with link features and World Champion STatus. I am certain it will be worth the trip. I may even give you one of these STs for your trouble."

Well folks, that’s it for this week. Think of me while you’re munching on the leftover turkey or ham during the next week. Until next week, keep your nose to the grindstone, your eye on the road, your back to the wheel, and your ear to the ground so that you’ll hear what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Space Invaders Hits N64!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" ’Yoda Stories’! ’Asteroids’!
’Chocobo’s Dungeon 2’! ’Re-Volt’!
And much more!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Army of Aliens Invades Earth with Activision’s
Update of Classic Arcade Hit ’Space Invaders’ for
the Nintendo 64

Attention gamers! Prepare to attack, counterattack and save the Earth from alien invasion when Activision, Inc. releases an all-new version of the legendary arcade classic ‘‘Space Invaders" for the Nintendo 64 the week of December 20, 1999. ‘‘Space Invaders" combines beautiful 3D graphics, explosive new weapons, expansive new worlds and a new generation of alien

invaders to create what promises to be one of this year’s hottest games. ‘‘Space Invaders" will be available in retail outlets throughout the United States and Canada and carries a suggested retail price of $49.95.

‘‘Space Invaders" pits gamers against wave after wave of 13 different outer space adversaries and 1 0 unrelenting alien ‘‘bosses" bent on conquering the universe. With over 100 spectacular levels filled with weapons and power-ups, ‘‘Space Invaders" will challenge even the most seasoned inter-galactic warrior. Armed with infrared laser beams, swarm-missiles and neutron blasts, gamers can turn the enemy into alien dust faster than ever before. The all-new cooperative mode even allows friends to join forces in a campaign to save the galaxy.

Developed by Z-Axis, ‘‘Space Invaders" offers game fans the best of both worlds -- out of this world ’70s sensibilities and ’90s attitude. As an added bonus, avid fans of the classic ‘‘Space Invaders" can search out a version of the original game hidden amongst the new alien worlds.

Originally introduced by Taito Corporation in 1978, ‘‘Space Invaders" is one of the most popular arcade games ever made. In 1980, the game was licensed by Atari for the 2600 game system and was the first arcade game ever adapted for Atari’s home system. The Space Invaders franchise has flourished for more than 20 years and according to Taito, the game has generated more than $500 million in revenues over multiple platforms including coin-op, the Atari 2600 and the Nintendo Game Boy.

incite PC Gaming and Channelware to Provide Readers With a Full-Length Version Of the New 3-D Asteroids Game for Free

incite PC Gaming, a lifestyle gaming publication from COMPUTEC MEDIA U.S.A, Inc., Wednesday announced a partnership with Channelware, a Nortel Networks venture, to provide incite PC Gaming readers with a full, playable version of the new 3D PC game title Asteroids from Activision. incite PC Gaming’s March 2000 issue will include the Asteroids game in its interactive CD-ROM and will be packaged in its patented die-cut cover. This marks the first time that a gaming publication will offer a complete version of a newly-released PC game for free trial use to its subscribers, in this limited time offer.

Using Channelware NetActive technology, incite CD-ROM will feature a full playable version of Activision’s Asteroids -- the popular space game and 1980’s arcade favorite. Unlike current demo samples that only highlight portions of the featured game, incite PC Gaming will allow readers to experience Asteroids without any limitations to game play. Embedded within the Asteroids game is Channelware’s NetActive technology, which allows gamers to use an Internet connection to NetActivate the game. Once consumers have played the Asteroids game for a preset amount of time, they are presented with choices of real time customized play and purchase preferences -- free play, extended play, or purchase at a special incite promotional price.

‘‘With incite, we’ve successfully introduced many ’firsts’ to the industry -- a new line of gaming lifestyle magazines, low consumer price points and mass distribution," said Torsten Oppermann, chief executive officer, COMPUTEC MEDIA U.S.A., Inc. ‘‘Now with Channelware’s NetActive technology, we will be the first lifestyle gaming publication to offer our readers a chance to sample a complete, playable version of a hit game, Asteroids, at

no cost or obligation."

‘‘We are pleased to partner with incite PC Gaming in this upcoming promotion," said Jeff Dodge, president and chief executive officer of Channelware. ‘‘With incite’s broad reach to the millions of casual gamers across North America, incite PC Gaming is the ideal platform to further promote our own cutting-edge NetActive technology and gaming in general."

Originally introduced by Atari, Asteroids, the addictive arcade space shooter game, made its debut in 1979 and went on to become one of the most popular arcade games of the 80’s. Activision’s re-release of this classic game offers all the nostalgia of the original with the modern look of today’s games. This next-generation version of Asteroids combines the classic fire-shield-thrust style of gameplay with vast new hyperspace 3-D worlds, explosive effects, and more enemies, weapons and modes of gameplay.

THQ Ships ‘Yoda Stories’ for Game Boy Color

THQ Inc. announced the release of ‘‘Yoda Stories" for the Game Boy Color.

‘‘Yoda Stories" allows players to join Luke Skywalker’s intriguing adventures as he trains to become a Jedi Knight and battles the evil Galactic Empire. Developed by Torus, ‘‘Yoda Stories" is available at major retail outlets nationwide for the suggested retail price of $29.99.

‘‘With the timeless popularity of the ‘Star Wars’ brand, ‘Yoda Stories’ for the Game Boy Color brings fans of the series their first hand-held version of the familiar classic," said Peter Dille, vice president of marketing, THQ. ‘‘We’re thrilled to add ‘Yoda Stories’ to our extensive line of Game Boy Color titles."

‘‘With THQ bringing LucasArts’ ‘Yoda Stories’ to Game Boy Color, players will discover yet another dimension to the ‘Star Wars’ gaming experience," said Jack Sorensen, president of LucasArts Entertainment Company LLC.

‘‘Yoda Stories" for Game Boy Color is a collection of short quests in which players encounter a variety of well-known ‘‘Star Wars" characters in several familiar environments. Along the way, gamers explore different worlds; collect devices, tools and weapons; and engage in combat against Imperial stormtroopers, bounty hunters and exotic aliens.

Acclaim’s R/C Racer Re-Volt Burns Rubber On The Sega Dreamcast

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. announced that its acclaimed radio-controlled racing game, Re-Volt, will arrive on store shelves today for the Sega Dreamcast. The game features the award winning graphics and gameplay of the critically praised PC version and adds new cars, new rooftops level, updated graphics and improved arcade style control.

‘‘Re-Volt features fast, furious and super-fun R/C racing action," said Noah Ullman, product manager at Acclaim Entertainment. ‘‘Combined with completely accurate racing physics and impeccable control, Re-Volt packs an incredibly fun racing experience into the Sega Dreamcast."

Re-Volt is developed by Acclaim Studios London and lets gamers race 42 (up from 28 in the PC version) unique cars in places they always wanted to, but couldn’t, until now. Gamers get to rip it up through the most amazing 3D environments ever seen in a racing game. Barrel through botanical gardens, maraud through museums, smash through supermarkets, go wild in the Wild West or rip it up on the new rooftops level. Re-Volt features numerous scale-sized pick-ups and weapons, such as shock waves and bottle rockets that contain more firepower than a full size patriot missile. Also included is a comprehensive track editor that lets gamers create and save their tracks, resulting in unlimited replayability.

Acclaim Studios London developed the advanced proprietary physics engine that enables the game to capture the true ‘‘look and feel" of R/C racing. Crashes, stunts, skids, and even the car’s antennas are created through computer models designed to simulate real-life as accurately as possible.

Test Drive Off-Road 3 for the Game Boy Color Rumbles Into Stores This Week

Infogrames North America Inc. announced that its off-road racing game, Test Drive Off-Road 3, for the Nintendo Game Boy Color, will begin shipping to stores this week. The PlayStation and personal computer versions shipped earlier this fall.

‘‘Test Drive Off-Road 3 gives gamers the ultimate off-road racing experience right in the palm of their hands," said Laddie Ervin, director of product marketing for sports and racing at Infogrames North America, Inc. ‘‘With the combination of real licensed vehicles and real-world locations, it is the best bet for a Game Boy gamer."

Test Drive Off-Road 3 for the Nintendo Game Boy and Game Boy Color systems combines real-world vehicles and environments with arcade-style play. Players will feel every impact with its built-in rumble feature and off-road obstacles, including boulders, trees and treacherous terrain on every track.

Players can choose from 10 licensed off-road vehicles, including the AM General Hummer, Dodge Ram V12, Dodge Shelby Durango SP360, Ford F150 4x4, Jeep Wrangler and Jeep Grand Cherokee, Land Rover Defender 90, Subaru Outback, Chenowth DRV-1 and Dodge T-Rex.

With 24 tracks in eight exotic real-world locations, Test Drive Off-Road 3 offers gamers a chance to drive through the deep, dark Black Forest of Germany, the icy streets of Canada, past the pyramids in Egypt or through the colorful autumn backdrop of Vermont. Other tracks include Moab, Utah; Cancun, Mexico; New Orleans, Louisianna; and Yosemite, California.

Test Drive Off-Road 3 offers three game modes including Tournament Play, Single Race and Patrol Chase. Tournament ‘‘Cup" Competition includes Amateur Cup, Semi-Pro, Pro, Summit, Grizzly and Mammoth. This is the player’s chance to win ‘‘prize money", which enables them to buy higher-end vehicles and earn power-ups, which enhance the performance of the vehicle (acceleration, top speed, traction, gearing, power winch, etc.). If a player places first in all the races, the hidden ‘‘Extreme Cup" is unlocked, which offers six previously unseen tracks. In the Single Race, players compete against some of the world’s top off-roading vehicles, while avoiding boulders, trees, and treacherous terrain. Here, players can

practice on troublesome tracks that they have unlocked in tournament play. Patrol Chase allows players to choose from several special off-road police vehicles and enforce the law by issuing citations to out-of-control off-roaders.

Developed by Xantera and published by Infogrames North America Inc., Test Drive Off-Road 3 for the Game Boy Color includes a battery backup feature that allows players to save everything from best track times to trophies won in tournament play. Test Drive Off-Road 3 can be found at most major retail outlets and is available at an estimated retail price of $29.99. The game is compatible with all Nintendo Game Boy systems.

Newest SQUARESOFT Title, Chocobo’s Dungeon 2, Ships for the PlayStation Game Console

Square Electronic Arts L.L.C. announced the release of Chocobo’s Dungeon 2 for the PlayStation game console, an adventure role-playing game geared toward beginning to intermediate gamers ages 10 through 22.

Chocobo’s Dungeon 2 is a title everyone can enjoy through the holiday season and beyond -- intuitive enough for younger gamers, yet continually challenging for more advanced players.

Chocobo is the familiar, chicken-like character who originated in Square’s world-renowned FINAL FANTASY series. Chocobo and a few other friends from FINAL FANTASY, including Mog, Cid, and Bahamut, embark on a quest in search of hidden treasure. The cartoonish crew explores rich, mysterious worlds that include garden mazes and the ocean floor.

As the players advance through multiple levels, they encounter traps, treasures and fearsome creatures like goblins, skeletons and golem, an extremely strong stone giant created by magic and brought to life in order to protect his party. Along the way, they find that courage and friendship are the secrets to finishing the game.

Chocobo’s Dungeon 2 offers an engrossing story line and dynamic role-playing elements. Recognizable characters along with simplified menus, magic selection, and easy-to-use item systems make this game an ideal title for first-time role-playing gamers.

Chocobo’s Dungeon 2 has an extremely low learning curve for novice users, yet the game is challenging for more advanced players, providing more than 40 hours of gameplay. Adding longevity and replay value to the title, a ‘‘Random Dungeon Generator" creates a brand new dungeon for players to navigate each time it is entered. Players are never in the same dungeon layout twice during a round of play.

Players can battle the monsters they encounter by using real-time Chocobo kicks or using powerful customized weapons created from pieces of armor that they collect during their adventure. Players can also refer to their magic book and whip up a spell in order to defeat these beasts. If none of these options work and players find themselves in trouble, they can opt to use a ‘‘Teleport Tag" and transport to safety.

Cooperative two-player simultaneous action allows two gamers to play at the same time on the same screen. Chocobo’s Dungeon 2 is compatible with the DUALSHOCK analog controller. The game is priced at US $40 and carries

an ESRB rating of ‘‘E" (Everyone).

NBA ShootOut 2000 Brings PlayStation Gamers Closer to the Court Than Ever Before

989 Sports announced Monday that NBA ShootOut 2000, which is licensed by the NBA and features all of the NBA teams, players and new team-specific NBA playbooks, will be available for the PlayStation game console Wednesday.

NBA ShootOut 2000 boasts all-new 3D player and arena graphics, advanced NBA-style gameplay, a revolutionary ‘‘Create Dunk" option, 300 new motion captured moves from eight NBA players and a TV-style presentation that includes commentary from New Jersey Nets broadcaster Ian Eagle.

‘‘NBA ShootOut 2000 incorporates enhanced graphics and the latest technology, as well as all of the great 989 Sports’ exclusive features that have made the NBA ShootOut series so fun to play," said Jeffrey Fox, vice president, marketing, 989 Studios.

‘‘We have received rave reviews from NBA players who have tested and consulted on this year’s game. No other PlayStation basketball videogame has the moves, look, feel, features and exciting gameplay of NBA ShootOut 2000."

Exclusive to NBA ShootOut 2000 is a proprietary high-tech game engine, all-new ‘‘Touch Shooting," ‘‘Advanced Dribbling Control," ‘‘Create Player" and ‘‘Create Dunk" options.

‘‘Touch Shooting" lets the gameplayer control accuracy of the shot, while ‘‘Advanced Dribbling Control" allows cross over dribbles, dribbling between the legs, and around the back. The ‘‘Create Dunk" option customizes dunking style, and the ‘‘Create Player" feature lets the gamer build individual players with specific attributes.

Every subtle and personalized move of the NBA, including more than 40 signature dunks, has been motion captured to amazing detail with the help of NBA players such as the Phoenix Suns’ Jason Kidd, the Cleveland Cavaliers’ Brevin Knight and Trajan Langdon, the Orlando Magic’s Charles ‘‘Bo" Outlaw, the Boston Celtics’ Paul Pierce and the Los Angeles Lakers’ Robert Horry.

More than 300 new player moves include drop steps from the post, one-handed bounce passes, turn around fade away shots, reverse lay ups and finger rolls -- just to name a few.

The gameplay control features -- ‘‘Read and React AI," ‘‘Matchup and Deny AI," Icon Cutting, Icon Passing and Icon Switching -- give the gamer ultimate control and an authentic NBA feel.

With the press of one button, gamers can call plays on the fly from specific team playbooks or call for cutters, screens and double teams. NBA ShootOut 2000 also includes complete roster management, full season and game statistics, and a variety of different gameplay modes, from exhibition to the NBA Finals.

NBA ShootOut 2000 features the Phoenix Suns’ All-Star point guard Jason Kidd on the package.

NBA ShootOut 2000 Key Features:

-- All-new, state-of-the-art game engine delivers new level of graphics and gameplay

-- 300 new animations include fake around-the-back passes, reverse lay ups, finger rolls, no-look passes, spins and more than 40 signature dunks

-- NBA style playbooks, designed specifically for each team’s specific style of play

-- Revolutionary "Create Dunk" option lets gamers customize their own dunking style

-- All 29 NBA teams and updated player rosters

-- All-new large 3D polygonal players scaled to actual height and weight with exact player faces

-- New "Touch Shooting" lets gameplayer control the accuracy of the shot

-- "Advanced Dribbling Control" allows the player to change dribbling styles

-- Customize players with the "Create Player" feature, including physical attributes and playing ability

-- New motion capture animations from real NBA players, including the Phoenix Suns’ Jason Kidd, the Cleveland Cavaliers’ Brevin Knight and Trajan Langdon, the Orlando Magic’s Charles "Bo" Outlaw, the Boston Celtics’ Paul Pierce and the Los Angeles Lakers’ Robert Horry

-- New TV-style presentation with play-by-play commentary from New Jersey Nets broadcaster Ian Eagle

-- All-new arenas with animated crowds and authentic arena music

-- "Read and React AI" lets the offense run plays that expose defensive weaknesses

-- "Matchup and Deny AI" lets the defense read and run the offense into disarray

-- Updated Icon Cutting, Icon Passing and Icon Switching

-- Complete roster management: create, trade, release, sign and draft players

-- Gameplay modes: Exhibition, Tournament, NBA All-Star Game, Playoffs and the NBA Finals

-- Full season and game statistics

-- Real NBA awards: MVP, scoring, rebounding, Defensive Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year

-- Up to eight players with Multi-tap adapter

Infogrames North America, Inc. Ships Boarder Zone, the First Snowboarding Title for the Game Boy Color

Infogrames North America, Inc. announced Tuesday the shipment of its snowboarding game, Boarder Zone, for the Nintendo Game Boy Color platform. Gamers will feel the ultimate winter rush when tackling the powdery slopes in this first Game Boy Color snowboarding title.

‘‘Boarder Zone provides gamers with hours of course-shredding fun," said Laddie Ervin, director of product marketing for sports and racing at Infogrames North America, Inc. ‘‘Being the only portable snowboarding game, Boarder Zone promises gamers the excitement of the slopes just about anywhere."

The game features three different game modes - Competition, Challenge, and Practice. Competition mode allows you to compete against other snowboarders in a variety of different races. In Challenge mode, your goal is to beat the high scores or fastest times of previously set records. Practice mode allows you to improve your boarding skills by flashing on-screen instructions for pulling off various tricks.

In addition to the different game modes, players may choose from any of four characters, all with distinct speed, balance, and jumping abilities. Characters can be equipped with four different boards, which are also rated by the same three characteristics. Once characters and equipment are chosen, gamers are ready to join a race.

Players can choose from several different races, including Race Attack, Trick Attack, Time Attack, Boarder Zone, Slalom Attack, and Race Ghost.

-- Race Attack - Race against another snowboarder. You can try to pull off trick moves, but spending time in the air only slows you down.
-- Trick Attack - In Competition mode you must score a certain number of points to advance to the next course. In Challenge mode you must do as many tricks as possible while still finishing the course in the allotted time.
-- Time Attack - Complete the course in the fastest time possible.
-- Boarder Zone - Accumulate points over five different events by pulling off tricks and maintaining solid landings.
-- Slalom Attack - Do a variety of tricks and finish the course within the time limit. You are given more time for each slalom flag you successfully negotiate.
-- Race Ghost - The Race Ghost is a special feature available in the Challenge mode that enables you to race against yourself. You can record your own movements by finishing a race, and then choose to race your own "ghost" in the next race. This feature can be used to help improve your boarding techniques.

LEGO Racers for the PlayStation Now Available

LEGO Media International Inc. Wednesday announced that LEGO Racers - the

first LEGO product for the PlayStation game console - now is available at retail stores throughout North America. LEGO Racers combines the creativity and imagination of virtual LEGO Brick construction with a high-speed racing game.

LEGO Racers is the only racing game that lets players customize their own LEGO race cars using authentic virtual LEGO bricks. Once the car is built, players can challenge another player or up to five other popular LEGO characters on 12 tracks based on LEGO Space, Pirates, Adventurers and Castle toy play themes. A unique system of power-ups provides players with numerous ways to gain the upper hand, as do hidden shortcuts and secret pathways on each track. Once players have mastered the game, they go head-to-head against the all-time LEGO racing champion, Rocket Racer.

‘‘We’re thrilled to be launching our first product for the PlayStation game console in time for the holidays," says Gregg Sauter, Director of Sales & Marketing for LEGO Media International, Inc. ‘‘The arrival of the PlayStation version of LEGO Racers makes it our first title available on three major gaming platforms."

LEGO Racers for the PlayStation game console, for two players, supports the DUALSHOCK analog controller and carries a suggested retail price of $39.95.

U.S. Federal Court Awards Judgment to Nintendo Against Hong Kong Manufacturer of Video Game Copier Devices

A U.S. Federal Court has entered judgment on behalf of Nintendo of America Inc. against Bung Enterprises Ltd., the Hong Kong manufacturer, and a U.S. distributor of devices designed to make and play unauthorized copies of Nintendo 64 and Game Boy software.

The court awarded Nintendo more than $7 million in damages plus interest and issued a permanent injunction that prevents Bung from marketing or selling any device that has the capability of copying Nintendo’s copyrighted or trademarked works. The injunction extends to the United States, Canada, Mexico and the countries of Central and South America and covers both traditional and Internet commerce. The ruling resolves litigation that had been brought by Nintendo against Bung.

Bung products include the Game Doctor, which is designed to operate with the Super Nintendo Entertainment System; the Doctor V64, V64 Jr. and Doctor 512, which operates with the N64; and the Doctor GB Xchanger and Doctor GB Card (collectively the ‘‘Doctor GB System"), which are designed to operate with the Game Boy. Each of the products permits either the unlawful copying of Nintendo software from the original cartridge format to the hard drive of a personal computer or to an Internet web site for worldwide distribution. These products infringe Nintendo’s copyrights, trademarks and patents, the Court ruled.

The Court’s judgment against Bung comes after Bung’s repeated abuses of the discovery process and disregard for the Court’s discovery orders. This conduct led the judge to conclude in the final hearing in this matter that ‘‘Bung has not proceeded . . . in a good faith manner in this litigation."

Nintendo’s General Counsel, Richard Flamm, commented: ‘‘Throughout the litigation Bung demonstrated nothing but contempt for the American judicial system and continued to develop and market products that were designed to

permit the pirating of video game software of Nintendo and its third party publishers. We are very pleased the court has resoundingly condemned Bung's conduct and confirmed the infringing nature of Bung's products."

The action against Bung is part of Nintendo's continuing war against video game piracy. Nintendo has filed hundreds of lawsuits against video game counterfeiters, winning a number of significant victories worldwide. The production and sale of counterfeit video game products cost Nintendo, its publishers and developers an estimated $750 million in sales worldwide last year.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Atari 2600 Garfield and Sky Patrol Protos Discovered and Available

By John Hardie

Hi everyone!

Just wanted to pass this along. I know a lot of people are always asking for new protos to be dumped and distributed, so here they are!

At last years Classic Gaming Expo several never-before-seen protos were shown for the first time. We were able to archive these games and have received permission to distribute them.

The first title, Garfield, was written by ace programmer, Steve Woita, who also brought us Taz and Quadrun. After archiving the game, we contacted Jim Davis, the creator of the Garfield comic and received permission to distribute the ROM.

The 2nd title, Sky Patrol, was programmed by Brad Johnson. After the show, we contacted Brad who was more than happy to pass along this gem to the classic community. Be sure to check out the box and label scans as well.

All the goodies can be found at the Classic Gaming Expo website:

http://www.cgexpo.com

Be sure to mark your calendar for CGE 2000. Who knows what wonderful stuff will show up there.

And don't forget to thank Jim Davis by buying a Garfield doll for Christmas! ;)

Happy Holidays!

The CGExpo Staff

John Hardie, Sean Kelly, & Keita Iida

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Time Honors Amazon.com Founder

In a year when anything dot-com seemed the quickest way to riches, Time magazine has declared one of the men behind the cybershopping revolution its Person of the Year.

Amazon.com, the company Jeff Bezos founded, has helped remake the retail landscape even while losing millions of dollars. Time declared Bezos the ''king of cybercommerce" in the issue out today.

''This year it was easier than most," said Time managing editor Walter Isaacson. ''Because there were two great themes of the year - online shopping and dot-com mania. The minute we thought of Bezos it was obvious that he embodied both."

Time said his ambitious, ever-expanding online venture has ''helped build the foundation of our future."

Bezos, 35, is the fourth-youngest person to win the distinction, after Charles Lindbergh (25 when he won in 1927), Queen Elizabeth II (26 in 1952) and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (34 in 1963).

Bezos quit his job at a New York investment firm in 1994 to found Seattle-based Amazon.com, one of the first - and biggest - ventures into online retailing. The company quickly became the Goliath of Internet bookselling and soon branched out into music and video.

Now Amazon, trying to build itself into an online superstore, sells everything from software and electronics to toys and home improvement items.

The company recently joined with Sotheby's to run auctions of clothing, wine and collectibles and bought partial stakes in niche Web sites including Drugstore.com, Gear.com, HomeGrocer.com and Pets.com.

''This is an incredible period of rapid change," Bezos said in a telephone interview. ''How everything is going to change ... isn't really known yet, but I don't think anybody at this point doubts that there's something important going on."

Amazon, though, suffers a problem common to Internet ventures. With Bezos plowing money into expansion, Amazon expects to lose at least $350 million this year and has warned it will not be profitable until 2002.

Some analysts wonder how much longer it can afford to keep growing.

‘‘That’s what Bezos represents," Isaacson said. ‘‘The attempt to build huge companies based on growth but not profit. It may not make sense, but it sure changed the economy this year, for better or for worse."

Bezos said he is confident Amazon and companies like it will eventually turn a profit.

‘‘People believe passionately in the future of the Internet and e-commerce, so they’re investing sort of commensurate with that belief," he explained.

‘‘We believe it would be a big mistake to be focused on short-term profitability, although of course we do care very much about long-term profitability."

Time editors choose the person of the year by deciding who had the greatest impact, good or bad, during the year. Bezos beat out Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and an idea for a package story based on the shootings at Columbine High School, Isaacson said.

Time plans to announce its choice for person of the century on Dec. 26. Contenders include President Franklin Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler and Albert Einstein, Time said.

1999 Brought Slew of New Gadgets

The profound technological changes spawned by the Internet accelerated in 1999, making it even easier for people and businesses to buy products and services, find information and communicate with each other.

These trends will surely continue in the coming year as a proliferation of gadgets for using the Internet without the aid of a personal computer come to market.

But a downside - losing touch with our human side and our natural environment - also continues with the millennium’s arrival. Exchanging e-mails is taking away from old-fashioned chatter with friends and co-workers. Kids may play with electronic gadgets more than with each other.

‘‘Technology isolates us in various ways," says Alan Marcus, a professor at Iowa State University who specializes in the history of technology.

‘‘You can sit at home, talk to people, without exposing ourselves to anything. You take yourself away from everything that’s human, which is interacting with people, experiencing human foibles."

For better or worse, this past year brought a sudden slew of electronics gadgets that offered a simple, inexpensive alternative to PCs for exchanging e-mail and surfing the Net.

They include products for the home, ranging from a $99 e-mail device that plugs into a regular phone jack to a touch-sensitive screen for Web navigation. There are Web-enabled cell phones that let people retrieve information off the Internet while they’re on the go.

Rounding out the trend, Sony plans to release by next spring an all-in-one PlayStation 2 video game console that will let people watch DVD movies, cruise the Web and eventually exchange e-mails - all on their TV screens.

To be sure, the ubiquitous Windows PC is expected to remain the dominant machine for accessing the Internet for at least the next few years. But the alternatives are nibbling at the edges, posing a threat to Microsoft Corp.’s lock on home computing.

Other technological stalwarts are getting serious competition, including the Sony Walkman, whose new rivals include gadgets for playing music that is downloaded from the Internet.

The digital music players still cost more than twice what a Walkman goes for. And they use expensive storage cards and provide only limited access to popular songs. But their benefits should start to outweigh the drawbacks this coming year.

Meanwhile, the slow Internet service that has frustrated many users should improve in 2000. More service providers are offering high-speed access though either conventional telephone lines or through TV cables, allowing faster downloading of Web information and services.

These changes have occurred in part because of an unprecedented pouring of investors’ money into tiny, entrepreneurial companies whose ideas and products persuade people to use the Internet.

Initial public offerings of Internet companies set new records in 1999, with 220 Web-related deals worth a total of $17 billion, according to the Securities Data Co. research firm. That’s up from just 41 deals worth $4 billion in 1998.

While the boom is expected to continue well into 2001, many weaker start-ups may fail or be swallowed up by larger companies as income fails to keep up with expenses , said Jeff Dachis, chief executive of Razorfish Inc., a New York-based Internet consulting firm.

‘‘There’s too much greed-led, money-driven hype going on out there, not enough focus on solid concepts and rationale thinking," Dachis said.

The explosive growth of the Internet itself has also raised concerns about its effect on society. The Internet, born as a way for scientists and academics to easily share research and ideas, has evolved to a point where people communicate in a more impersonal way. It allows some people to isolate themselves from others.

As the new technology delivers the Internet to more people, those concerns are continuing, according to Marcus, the Iowa State professor

‘‘All those upsides have hidden problems associated with them," he said. ‘‘That’s the human experience."

One In Four Online Purchases Thwarted, Study Finds

The problem with the explosion of online stores is that more than a quarter

of all the purchases attempted over the Internet never go through, according to a study.

Andersen Consulting went shopping at 100 of the biggest and best-known online stores. Out of 480 gifts it tried to buy, it was able to complete only 350 purchases.

The study found that more than one quarter of the top Web sites either could not take orders, crashed in the process, were under construction, had entry blocked, or were otherwise inaccessible.

‘‘It was pretty eye-opening," said Robert Mann of Andersen’s Supply Chain practice. He said he was stunned by the results of the survey, which had initially been designed to study only the time it took to complete and fulfill orders.

Mann said he found instead that ‘‘speed is not really the issue. The issue is reliability."

Although Andersen did not single out the best and the worst of these online stores, Mann said that none of them was problem-free. In general, though, the study found that the traditional retailers had a worse track record than the pure-play Internet stores, known as e-tailers.

‘‘The e-tailers who depend on this as their bread and butter have generally invested more on back-end systems. Many retailers have not invested as well," said Mann.

Another big problem was orders not arriving on time. The traditional retailers were once again the big offenders, according to the study, which found they delivered the order when promised only about 20 percent of the time. E-tailers, by comparison, were on time about 80 percent of the time.

Curiously, some items took much longer to deliver. The average time for an electronics gift to arrive was 3.9 days, while music deliveries typically took 7.4 days.

Andersen plans to next study online merchants’ ability to handle returns -- which Mann said could be their next big challenge if consumers sent back all those gifts that did not arrive by Christmas Day.

Toys R Us Coughs Up $100 for Missed Holiday Gifts

Toys R Us Inc. is discovering electronic commerce is far from child’s play.

The popular toy retailer, which has been relying on its Web site to stave off growing online competition, said Wednesday it is dishing out $100 coupons to some disappointed Internet shoppers who will not be getting their gifts in time for Christmas.

Toys R Us said overwhelming volume prevented it from processing and fulfilling the entire batch of orders placed on or before Dec. 10, its deadline for Christmas delivery by standard shipping.

‘‘Basically e-commerce had a phenomenal year," said a spokesperson for the Paramus, N.J.-based toy retailer. ‘‘Due to the volume, Toys R Us has

been doing as many transactions as they can, but couldn’t get through all the orders."

Toys R Us has notified the affected customers by e-mail, explaining they could cancel their orders for a refund or use 100 Geoffrey dollars, named for the company’s giraffe mascot, toward purchases at its retail locations. One Geoffrey dollar translates into one U.S. dollar.

Toys R Us emphasized the news -- disappointing to some and perhaps welcome to others -- affected only a small percentage of online shoppers, but the retailer did not disclose the exact figure. Toys R Us said customers that did not receive an e-mail should be getting their toys in time to place under the Christmas tree.

Toys R Us, which said its average online order is roughly $60, added that some of the customers might still receive their gifts on time. Those lucky shoppers would be able to keep the gift and the 100 Geoffrey dollars.

Toysrus.com has posted a notice on its Web site, alerting customers that time is running out for holiday orders.

‘‘If you place a new order today we can no longer guarantee delivery by December 24th. Our #1 priority is to process your existing orders," the notice reads.

Although it had boosted staffing levels and added more servers to its system to gear up for the holiday season, the spokesperson said the company was still not fully prepared for the shopping onslaught.

Toysrus.com has indeed enjoyed healthy traffic during the holidays, but the site has suffered glitches as its parent races to cash in on the Internet and ward off aggressive competitors.

The company, best known for its sprawling warehouse-type stores, has been relying heavily on toysrus.com to do battle with toy sites like KBKids.com, a unit of Consolidated Stores Corp., as well as Internet-only companies like eToys Inc.

Toys R Us has also been facing steep competition from Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and has had to grapple with a series of management changes.

In mid-November, Toys R Us said overwhelming traffic was blocking entry for many Web shoppers. The company said at the time that it had more than 900 employees shipping orders from its Memphis customer fulfillment center and was tweaking its technology infrastructure to meet demand.

In its first year-to-year comparison survey of online holiday shopping trends, market research firm Media Metrix Inc. said earlier this month that traffic to electronic commerce sites that sell toys rose 99 percent over the same period last year.

The Toys R Us’ Web site showed the broadest increase over 1998, with a 355 percent jump in traffic during Thanksgiving week to about 1.6 million visitors from 350,000 in 1998, according to the Media Metrix survey.

While federal officials have imposed a moratorium on new Internet taxes, some taxpayers might be surprised to find their states soon asking them to pony up for online purchases made this year.

Specifically, online shoppers in North Carolina and Michigan may get a bit of a surprise come tax time.

Tax authorities in both those states have added new line items to state income tax forms, asking residents to total up their out-of-state purchases -- including items bought online -- and cough up the uncollected sales tax.

In both states, that tax totals 6 percent.

Officials are quick to point out that these are not new taxes -- both states have long required consumers to pay sales or use taxes on items purchased out of state. Michigan says its law dates back to 1937.

In fact, all 46 states that charge a sales or use tax expect citizens to pay taxes on items bought out of state, including things like catalog purchases and stuff ordered over the phone.

Only most consumers never do.

"It’s on the honor system, like most taxes. We have virtually 100 percent compliance on the business end, because businesses are well aware of use tax and do pay, and we routinely audit businesses," said Bridget Medina, press secretary for the Michigan Department of Treasury. "But individuals just aren’t aware of it."

But until now, payment has been sketchy and enforcement difficult.

With the sharp rise in online spending, however, states have come to the conclusion that they need to something to avoid losing out on all that uncollected revenue.

"The Internet has brought it more into focus and exaggerated the effects of not collecting, especially to Michigan’s Main Street retailers," Medina said. "Internet sales are just booming."

Indeed they are. Jupiter Communications predicts consumers will spend almost $15 billion online this year. But very few of those sales will be charged sales tax. That’s because states can’t require an out-of-state firm to levy a tax on its behalf.

Businesses are only required to collect sales taxes in state where they have a presence such as offices or warehouses. That’s why catalogs and online stores often include lines on their checkout forms saying something like "sales tax is applied to orders shipped to NJ, NY, VA and TN." Outside of the specified states, the consumer is left to his or her own devices.

"We admit it is a difficult tax to collect. The bottom line, the tax is owed, if during the course of an audit it comes up, that’s an issue," said Jeffrey Bousha, spokesman for Massachusetts Department of Revenue. Massachusetts requires residents to pay taxes on out-of-state purchases by filing a separate form. But Bousha acknowledged that many residents don’t fill out the proper forms.

Don’t expect the states to call out the enforcement dogs to collect Internet taxes. Michigan, for example, will be holding a number of press conferences to increase awareness of the tax law, but is not planning on any extra enforcement.

The Internet sales tax issue has thrown legislators and e-commerce companies into a quandary. After Congress passed a moratorium on new Internet taxes, it established a government commission to look into the matter. That commission has met several times without coming to agreement.

One camp wants to keep the Internet a tax-free zone. Supporters of that notion include presidential candidate John McCain, R-Va., and tax commission chairman James Gilmore, who is also the governor of Virginia.

But others, particularly the National Association of Governors, object strongly to what they call "tax loopholes" that take revenue away from local governments.

The NGA has proposed that the entire sales tax structure be simplified, with states and local governments adopting the same classification systems, definitions and audits so that "the primary responsibility for calculating, collecting, reporting, and paying the tax is lodged with "Trusted Third Parties" instead of the seller."

Intel Readies 750, 800-MHz Coppermine

Intel announced Monday that 750-MHz and 800-MHz versions of the "Coppermine" Pentium III, setting the stage for another speed battle with rival AMD.

As previously reported, the launch is a way to counter the success rival AMD has had with the Athlon, a Pentium III competitor that has received rave reviews. AMD released a 750-MHz version of the chip late last month. Although AMD had supply crunches of its own earlier this year, Athlon processors are becoming much easier to find, according to sources.

AMD has shown some customers the 900-MHz Athlon processors, as it prepares to take the speed crown back from Intel.

Monday’s announcement, however, will be symbolic to a certain extent and reflect the pressure Intel is experiencing in its core market. Few of the new chips, originally scheduled for the first quarter of 2000, have been shipped to PC makers, sources said, meaning consumers won’t see many computers using them until next year.

In a statement, Intel said the new processors would not ship in volume until the first quarter. The 800-MHz version will cost $851 in 1,000-unit quantities and the 750-MHz Coppermine will go for $803.

Historically, Intel waited until it was producing fairly substantial volumes of its new, faster chips before taking them public. The emphasis for both companies apparently has shifted to getting the faster chips out at a more rapid rate.

The emphasis on getting faster chips out more quickly will benefit performance fanatics, commented Nathan Brookwood, an analyst at Insight 64. If Intel accelerates the release of the 800-MHz chip, this will likely lead to quicker releases of faster Athlons and even 1-GHz processors

earlier than expected.

"What we're likely to see is Intel taking the lead, and then AMD taking it back," he said. An accelerated schedule would also mean the company is having greater-than-expected success with the 0.18-micron manufacturing process, a more refined manufacturing process that allows Intel to use smaller wires and transistors.

Performance processors typically have come out in small volumes that grow over time--but that trend appears to be changing. Analysts and some computer makers continue to note that there are still limited supplies of the 733-MHz Coppermine Pentium IIIs, which were announced in October. Coppermine was the code name for the new generation of Pentium IIIs that came out that month. Coppermines differ from the standard Pentium III because, among other reasons, they are made in the 0.18-micron process.

"Intel wants to go into the next millennium with the fastest PC processor," said Ashok Kumar, an analyst at US Bancorp Piper Jaffray. Regarding availability, he said, "1.5 million Coppermine processors will be shipped this quarter. Clearly there is a supply constraint."

There are also continuing supply problems with the components. One is motherboards, which are necessary to couple the latest Pentium III chips with Rambus memory, a vital ingredient for wringing out the full performance potential of the latest Pentium IIIs, sources said.

"The 700-MHz (Pentium IIIs) are getting easier and easier to get. The 733s are impossible to find," said one executive at a small computer maker, who added that Intel's Rambus-centric motherboards are extremely difficult to find. "Nothing has come out with Rambus on it."

An analyst note issued today by Richard Gardner of Salomon Smith Barney reiterated the point. PC manufacturers face a slight risk for lower-than-expected revenues this quarter "due to Intel microprocessor supply constraints," he wrote.

Gateway is one victim of Intel supply shortages and the ongoing battle between AMD and Intel. Merrill Lynch analyst Steve Fortuna said on Friday, Intel processor shortages had disproportionately had affected Gateway, and he lowered fourth-quarter sales estimates by $117 million. Gateway only recently moved to all Intel processors, having previously offered AMD processors on many consumer systems.

While a speedy release can give a company bragging rights, the associated low volumes can backfire on manufacturers as well, because customers get weary of not being able to get the glorious product they have read about, said Peter Glaskowsky, an analyst at MicroDesign Resources.

Apple in the past has run into this problem, he said. Historically, Intel has enjoyed a reputation for being able to produce steady volumes, he added.

How the product road map for Intel and AMD will change in the future is uncertain, but most likely the chips will come out faster than expected.

Officially, Intel has pegged the 800-MHz chip for release in the first half of 2000, while analysts have said until recently that it will occur in the first quarter. The company then is expected to follow with Pentium IIIs running at 866 MHz and then a 933-MHz version, said sources.

Willamette, the code name for the chip that will succeed the Pentium III, is due toward the end of 2000. Intel has said it will run at 1 GHz (1,000 MHz) and faster. An acceleration of the road map, however, may mean that Intel churns out a 1-GHz Pentium III in 2000 and releases Willamette at a faster speed, said Brookwood.

For its part, AMD is slated to come out with an 800-MHz Athlon in the first part of 2000 and hit 1 GHz by the second half. The company also will bifurcate the Athlon line so that it can fit into inexpensive PCs and notebooks.

Pure chip speed aside, the overall performance of both chips is affected by other factors. The Athlon, for example, comes with a 200-MHz system bus, which will get faster. The Pentium III currently uses a slower 133-MHz or 100-MHz system bus.

By contrast, the Pentium III can currently be paired with faster Rambus memory when available or 133-MHz computer memory, or SDRAM. Athlon right now is only used with slower 100-MHz SDRAM.

Cordless Keyboard-Mouse: No Strings

One longtime assumption has been that wireless peripherals, including keyboards and mice, although interesting at first glance, function pretty much like the conventional wired versions.

That assumption is now under serious attack from Logitech’s Cordless Desktop Pro, a wireless keyboard and mouse combination that adds some comfort to life at the keyboard.

A standard keyboard requires the hands to be pointed straight ahead, which puts pressure on wrists. Logitech’s keyboard is ergonomically split, placing the keys used by each hand at that hand’s natural angle, with the fingertips pointing inward.

That helps. But what helps even more is that because there are no wires, you can put the keyboard wherever it’s most comfortable to use. This was written with the keyboard angled downward on my lap, the heels of my hands placed comfortably on the included rest.

And unlike infrared cordless devices that have to be in line of sight with the receiver, this digital radio-driven device can face any direction. There are distance limitations: A test from about 25 feet away failed, but no one except an eagle is likely to be working that far from a monitor.

The mouse is contoured to the shape of the hand - the right hand - and has a scroll button and a programmable side button. The keyboard has an array of rubbery keys along the top that can be programmed for various Web sites and used to control the CD-ROM player or shut down the computer.

Both devices talk to a widget about the size of a cigarette pack that attaches to the PS-2 mouse and keyboard ports. Other than asking that it be placed at least 8 inches from the CPU and monitor to avoid radio-frequency interference, Logitech imposes no positioning requirements.

The installation software worked fine, but the computer, when rebooted, froze as soon as the Logitech software appeared on the task bar. This turned out to be a conflict with another program, and fairly easy to fix by booting up on the Windows 98 emergency disk and deleting the other program in DOS mode. The parts of the Logitech program that appear on the task bar are indicators for caps lock and num lock, which do not appear on the keyboard.

Basic keyboard and mouse functions will work with Windows 3.1, but if you want all the bells and whistles, you have to be running Windows 95, 98 or NT.

The Cordless Desktop Pro comes with batteries for both the keyboard and mouse. It costs $129.95 and is available at retail outlets and direct from Logitech.

Juno Gives Free Access -- For A Price

Juno Online Services Inc., which began as a free e-mail company, is now offering a plan to give away Internet access to consumers willing to wade through ads.

The new service, which includes e-mail with file attachments, will be offered to consumers who fill out a questionnaire and agree to view advertisements tailored to their responses. The ads will be displayed on a navigation banner that can be moved around the desktop, but not removed. The service can downloaded for free on the Juno Web site.

Users of Juno’s free e-mail service will be automatically switched over to the service in the coming weeks. E-mail users not wanting to take advantage of the Internet access can continue their usage without being subjected to the banner advertising.

Juno says it had 2.9 million subscribers in the third quarter, mostly for its free e-mail service. The company also offers an Internet service based on a promotional offer of $9.95 per month for 150 hours of access. People paying for Juno access will receive free customer service and priority access to the company’s networks.

"It’s a little like the difference between an economy class airplane seat and a first class seat," said Juno CEO Charles Ardai when comparing the free and pay services. "They both get you there and there’s a market for both."

Juno says it plans to keep costs low for its free service by providing fewer modem lines per user than other services -- something it says is possible because research shows Juno users spend fewer hours online than other ISP users.

The company said it also had plans to roll out a broadband digital subscriber line service in 2000.

And, Juno announced plans to launch an aggressive ad campaign next year designed to boost its subscriber base.

Mozilla Releases Preview of Web Browser

Struggling to close the gap in the war with Microsoft, Mozilla.org has released a preview of its first full-featured Web browser.

Mozilla, founded by Netscape Communications to handle the open source development of the Communicator browser, is referring to the release merely as the M12 build. But after review by Mozilla contributors and other followers, the build may gain "alpha" status, a term normally reserved for the first official trial version of a product.

"It’s not definitively an alpha," said Mitchell Baker, whose title is Chief Lizard Wrangler for Mozilla.org. "Alpha means a lot of things to a lot of people. Our goal in putting out an alpha is to label it as something that someone can use regularly for their browser and mail client."

Mozilla’s releases are distinct from Netscape’s. Netscape, which was acquired by America Online last year, will put out a Netscape-branded version of the browser, including releasing its own initial alpha and intermediate beta trial versions. Both Netscape and Mozilla.org declined to give target dates for those releases.

Communicator has faced a series of delays on its way to market, fueling Microsoft’s ride to overtake Netscape in the browser market.

For version 5.0, Mozilla has been rebuilding Communicator from the ground up, creating a browser made of separable components that hews closely to industry standards recommended by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Communicator 5.0 is based on Gecko, the Communicator browsing engine responsible for rendering graphics and text.

Notably, it uses Extensible User Interface Language (XUL), a new technology for creating the user interface with Web programming languages, rather than computer coding languages. XUL is expected to make it easier for developers to create Mozilla-based browsers for multiple computer operating systems.

"This release is in many ways a breakthrough product compared to the older browser," said Chris Saito, senior director of client product marketing for Netscape. "It’s...designed to be very small from a download perspective, and it’s faster than the older browser. It has the best standards support of any commercial browser out there across all different platforms supported on Mozilla.org, including Windows, Macintosh, Linux and several other Unix versions."

Differences between the Mozilla browser and the one that Netscape will ultimately ship are already apparent. Mozilla’s, for instance, features an instant messaging client that would compete with AOL’s market-leading AOL Instant Messenger. And Saito promised instant messaging innovations from Netscape in version 5.0, though he declined to discuss them.

Sources have said Netscape plans to further integrate its email and instant messaging applications.

One of Mozilla’s chief problems as an open source project has been its failure to rally large numbers of developers outside Netscape to chip in

with coding, bug-hunting and other tasks.

But lizard-wrangler Baker said the number of non-Netscape contributors to Mozilla has increased "dramatically."

Baker cited a decision by Intel and Nokia to use Mozilla's Gecko browser engine in Internet-enhanced television products. The products use the open source Linux operating system and are expected to launch in the second half of 2000.

ISPs Look To Kill Viruses Before They Strike

A few big Internet service providers and anti-virus firms are trying to change the face of virus protection for personal computers.

New generations of viruses like Melissa or Bubbleboy multiply too quickly for individual users to keep track, companies say. The best way to control infections is to place anti-virus software into a network, companies claim, so an email can be disinfected before it reaches its destination.

"This year has seen an explosion of fast-spreading email-borne viruses, that can spread to thousands of machines in hours," said Dan Schrader, a researcher with anti-virus firm Trend Micro. "There is no way that the desktop model can protect against that."

It's an idea that is only just beginning to take off in the world of Internet service providers (ISPs)--but it comes at a time when service providers are desperately looking for ways to distinguish themselves in an increasingly competitive market.

The traditional modes of anti-virus protection are grounded in the days when consumers largely had to worry about infection from swapping floppy disks. Since most computer users didn't trade disks often, viruses spread slowly, with occasionally updated software packages sufficiently protecting most users.

But then along came the Internet, as well as a host of security holes in programs like Microsoft Outlook that virus-writers found ways to exploit. The most common viruses are now spread through email, and fast-spreading variants like Melissa can sweep across the online world in the space of a few days.

The host of new viruses means users need to update anti-virus software within hours or days of each discovery to be protected--and that's simply not realistic, analysts say. Most home users update their software every few weeks or months, at best.

By contrast, ISPs generally have technical staff on board around the clock, and are in a much better position to keep up with the latest anti-virus updates and react quickly to new outbreaks. Many ISPs are already acting as the first line of defense to filter out material that is slightly less threatening: junk email.

The strategy is still fairly new, and only a handful of ISPs have jumped on board. The Net business of local phone firm US West provides its customers with anti-virus services, as does Sprint's small-business Net division. Schrader said that Trend Micro is also working with British

Telecommunications, while a few large U.S.-based ISPs are still in the preliminary stages of considering network-based anti-virus services.

To offer the service, an ISP or telephone firm will install software inside a mail server to scan incoming email for known virus codes. The model is similar to what happens at many big corporations, which maintain antivirus protections at the gateway between their own network and the Internet.

"Desktop applications, unless you update them on an extremely regular basis, don't protect you from all the viruses that are coming through the Internet," said Audrey Thompson, director of Internet product management at US West. "We can do that at the ISP level more effectively."

Many ISPs aren't convinced of the benefits of the network strategy. The enormous amount of technical work required to scan incoming email traffic and to connect to billing and directory systems just doesn't make the service worthwhile, they say.

"At the server level it would be an incredibly big job, and some people might consider it an invasion of privacy," MindSpring spokesman Ed Hansen said. "As far as I know, we're not considering that right now."

For the most part, security analysts approve of the technology, agreeing that it's easier and faster for a few thousand ISPs to protect themselves against a virus attack than it is for a few million individual users. But they warn that ISPs can't provide perfect protection, any more than desktop software can.

The fastest viruses can spread a long way in the time it takes anti-virus software firms to create antidotes, noted Elias Levy, chief technology officer of Security Focus, a company that monitors computer security problems. Anti-virus software, wherever it is installed, can still miss some malicious code or block emails that aren't actually infected, he added.

"It's a good service," Levy said. "But it might provide people with a false sense of security."

Ask Jeeves Says to Defend Patent Suit by MIT Profs

Online search service Ask Jeeves Inc.on Friday rejected allegations that it has infringed on patents held by two professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and termed ‘‘without merit" a lawsuit based on those charges.

MIT professors Patrick Winston and Boris Katz filed the suit in U.S. District Court in Boston, claiming Ask Jeeves infringed on two of their patents, illegally using natural language question-and-answer technology they developed.

Ask Jeeves spokeswoman Heather Staples said the company has not yet been served with a complaint, filed on Thursday, but said the company believes the allegations are ‘‘without merit."

She said Ask Jeeves' technology, which is also licensed to the popular AltaVista search engine site, is entirely home-grown. AltaVista is

majority owned by CMGI Inc., and filed with regulators on Friday to raise up to $300 million in an initial public offering.

‘‘We didn’t buy any technology from someone and then create this system," she said. ‘‘Everything was developed at Ask Jeeves."

The professors, who referred questions to their lawyers, have asked the court to stop Ask Jeeves from using or passing along the technology, and seek damages and payment for royalties they said they should have received. The lawyers declined to elaborate on the filing.

The patents, granted in 1994 and 1995, relate to methods for retrieving computer text and database material, including the use of ‘‘natural language" searching.

Judge Overrules Microsoft’s Objection To Court Advisor

Microsoft Corp.’s appeal to remove Lawrence Lessig as an advisor to the United States District Court in the software giant’s ongoing antitrust case was denied by a federal judge Monday.

Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson had requested in November that Lessig, a Harvard professor, be brought in as an "amicus curiae," or friend of the court, to advise on the final judgment in the case brought by the Department of Justice and 19 state attorneys general against Microsoft.

Microsoft’s lawyers appealed the decision on the grounds that Lessig was biased. Microsoft cited Lessig’s involvement in open-source software projects, which compete directly with Microsoft’s business, among other reasons.

"The Court suspects that there may be valid legal analyses to be made of its Findings of Fact which would comport fully with neither position likely to be taken by the parties, but which the Court itself might find more consistent with the public interest," Jackson wrote in overruling Microsoft’s objection. "It was in anticipation that Professor Lessig might offer just such an analysis that the Court extended the invitation to him to appear as amicus curiae."

In his findings of fact, issued last month, Jackson declared Microsoft a monopolist that has abused its power.

Jackson’s latest decision comes as Judge Richard Posner in Chicago continues to meet with both sides in hopes of reaching a settlement in the case.

In other Microsoft news, longtime executive Pete Higgins is leaving the company, according to published reports.

Higgins most recently headed up Microsoft’s Interactive Media Group, charged with bolstering the company’s Internet operations and services. The Microsoft Network and the Expedia and CarPoint sites were developed or expanded under Higgins from 1996 to 1998, when he took a leave of absence.

Higgins, who joined Microsoft in 1983, will now start a management consulting practice with former executives from Starwave and Nextel, according to reports.

Early Y2K Bugs Aren’t All Fun And Games

The Y2K-related glitches we’ve seen so far have ranged from the silly to the scary.

In Maine, an inconvenient yet innocuous glitch registered automobiles as horseless carriages. But in California, a Y2K-test-gone-awry spewed sewage into the streets.

Still, counties, cities and companies in the U.S. are learning from the snafus, and vow to at least ensure health and safety, even if they can’t thwart minor annoyances.

"In this country, we’re very optimistic that it’s going to be along the lines of inconveniences rather that tragedy," said Don Meyer, spokesman for the U.S. Senate’s Y2K committee.

However, he acknowledged that even the experts don’t really know what’s going to happen after the clock strikes midnight at the end of this month.

"The minor inconveniences we’ve seen may be a harbinger of things to come," Meyer conceded. "Of course, we hope that’s not the case."

The glitch, as most folks know by now, occurs when computers read the date 2000 as 1900, because of software designed to read only the last two years in a date. The first major manifestation of the glitch occurred a few years ago, when computers started rejecting purchases from people using credit cards that expired in 2000.

Others lost their ATM cards, after cash machines gobbled them up because the 2000 expiration date just wouldn’t compute.

Banks moved swiftly to address the problem, and have become leaders in addressing Y2K fears. But after the debacle, many delayed issuing cards with 2000 expiration dates for several months while they tackled the glitch.

Since then, other date-related problems have surfaced as companies and government agencies have tested their software to make sure it’s Y2K compliant -- only to find in some cases that it was not.

In June, one of the largest Y2K tests spawned a potential health hazard, as four million gallons of raw sewage spewed onto Southern California streets. During testing at local reclamation plan, a computer shut a gate by mistake, backing up sewage into the city of Van Nuys. City officials now say the problem has been resolved.

Others are hoping that the medical community has addressed the glitches it has seen so far.

Tufts Medical plan dropped 18,000 Medicaid patients earlier this year, after it decided fixing Y2K glitches took precedence over keeping up the Medicaid system. The city of San Jose, Calif., found a glitch in the defibrillators in its ambulances, and sent them into the manufacturer to be repaired.

Glitches also have plagued businesses. At least one food distributor lost a large amount of inventory before it discovered its computer system was tossing out items that expired in 2000, thinking they had sat on the shelf for the past 99 years.

Other incidents, such as the horse-less carriage snafu in Maine, have been almost laughable. In Philadelphia, about 500 people got a jury summons in November telling them to show up in 1900. And the Social Security Administration alarmed 30,000 people earlier this year by sending them notices that their benefits would expire in 1900.

The biggest worry among some tech experts is the virus explosion that could come as malicious hackers take advantage of people's Y2K fears. So far, researchers have found at least seven Y2K-related viruses, including some that masquerade as a Y2K fix and others that could harm computers when the New Year strikes.

The White House was so concerned about New Year's viruses and hacks it appealed to hackers and virus writers not to pick New Year's weekend for exploits.

But even on the virus front, it hasn't been as bad as experts expected. "There's been very little activity," said Carey Nachenberg, Chief Researcher at Symantec Corp.'s AntiVirus Research Center. "People have been very calm."

Web Site Crowns Dumbest Bosses

Employees outraged, offended, or simply left shaking with laughter because of actions by their employers have taken advantage of their own office horror stories to anoint the millennium's dumbest bosses.

Claude Carter, the creator of the Web site myboss.com, received 5,000 entries from all over the world for his contest. The most outrageous stories of office woe were forwarded to a panel of judges.

Several winners were chosen, including one from an employee who wrote that the boss was walking to court for a major corporate lawsuit when he noticed a shapely woman in front of him. He remarked aloud how pretty she was from behind and wondered what her face looked like.

''Immediately the woman turned around and my boss realized she was the judge assigned to our case," the employee wrote.

''I thought it was funny because it indicates sometimes how the libido creeps into the corporate credo," Carter said. ''I think that's a common occurrence. But this time it got out of control."

The Web site posts a new collection of office horror stories every Monday. A winner was picked each week during the contest's 60-day run. A panel chosen by Carter then chose the winners.

Entrants had to submit an e-mail address where they could be contacted and sign a document claiming the story was authentic, Carter said.

In some cases, however, Carter admitted he can't be sure the stories are real. One employee, for example, told the story of his boss not believing

a bomb scare that evacuated the office. Once the boss got outside, he kicked the package, and was killed.

The winners received as much as $1,000 in cash and copies of Carter's myboss.com spin-off book of corporate anecdotes, jokes and one-liners, ''Working for a Loser!!!!" (One copy for the employer, the other for the well-deserving boss.)

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